The Myrtle

"INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE." ISA. LV. 13

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For the Myrtle.

A Talk About Angels.

"AUNTIE, do angels have wings?" asked Edith, looking up suddenly from a picture which had engaged her attention for some minutes.

"Do you think they have?" I said, after the Yankee fashion of asking a question instead of replying to the one asked.

"They are always pictured with wings," she replied, passing me the book of engravings in her hand.

"I do not remember that those persons who have seen angels, describe them as having wings," I replied.

"Do people ever *see* angels?" asked Edith, her blue eyes opening wide in astonishment.

"They were often seen by men in olden times, whether or not they may be seen by men now," I replied. "Take your Bible, little one, and let us see if it speaks of angels' wings."

Edith quickly returned with the desired book.

"Now turn to the eighteenth chapter of Genesis and read the first and second verses. There you see it speaks of the angels that stood by Abraham as three *men*. It says nothing of their looking different from ordinary men, though in some way Abraham knew they were angels. A little farther on it tells us, that Abraham offered to wash their feet and give them food, and they answered 'so do, as you have said.' The next chapter tells us that Lot entertained two angels at even. They tarried all night, and 'the men of Sodom compassed the house around,' and demanded of Lot the *men* that came into his house that night. So they, too, must have appeared in the human form to all who saw them."

"Then you do not think that angels have wings?" asked Edith, not quite satisfied with my answers.

"No, darling. I think that when we drop this natural body we shall rise a spiritual body, and that that spiritual body will be of the same form as our earthly body, only more perfect, 'for the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial another.'"

"I alwas thought angels could fly," said Edith, looking a little dubious at having her theory overturned.

"I imagine they move with the swiftness of

thought," I replied, "that they need no wings to aid them, but if they desire to be in a place, directly they are there. God is a spirit, and we are told he made man in his image."

"It seems plain to me now," said Edith. "I never reasoned about it before. Thank you, auntie, for helping me to think."

"When a person dies it is but the setting free of the spiritual body. If we could forget their suffering while sick, and our own loneliness, the death of a dear friend would be a very happy event."

"Where is the spiritual body while we are upon the earth?" asked Edith.

"According to the teachings of St. Paul," I replied, "every person on earth is possessed of two bodies. He says 'there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.' I understand that the 'spiritual body' resides in the natural or earthly body, while we live on earth, growing beautiful if our thoughts are pure and our deeds unselfish, but growing less and less lovely if selfish acts and impure thoughts mar our daily life."

"Can you and I see angels?" asked Edith.

"Not with our natural eyes. When we come into possession of our spiritual sight and hearing we shall both see and hear them, I hope."

"That will be when we die," said Edith, thoughtfully.

"Sometimes it occurs that persons see and hear spirits before death removes the material body. We know that the prophets did. You remember the story of Samuel, how he thought Eli was calling him; but the good man had not spoken, and it proved to be the voice of the Lord calling him, no doubt through one of his angels. The two Marys saw the angel at the sepulchre, who told them that the Saviour was not there, but risen. Many cases are cited in both the Old and New Testament, of the opening of the spiritual senses."

"I remember one," said Edith. "It was in my last Sunday School lesson. The prophet Elisha saw the mountains over against him covered with chariots and horsemen; the young man with him could not see them. Elisha prayed that his eyes might be opened, and the Lord opened his eyes, and the young man saw the vision with the prophet."

"Yes. His spiritual sight was opened and he could behold spiritual beings. Sometimes one sense is opened, sometimes more than one. Jacob, when he wrestled with the angel, saw, heard, and felt him. Three of his spiritual senses were opened then. Frequently we know of dying persons seeing spirits, beautiful lights, or hearing music. Their spiritual senses are being opened. I will relate a case. A mother had three little boys, the eldest, Harry, sickened and died, the next one sickened of the same disease. One day when his mother was beside him he exclaimed, 'I see Harry! I see Harry!' 'You mean you see Bennie, do you not?' asked the mother, referring to the baby in her arms. 'No! No! I see Harry!' repeated the child. In a few hours his little spirit had joined the loved ones gone before. Such incidents are precious, as they help to prove that our loved ones in the spirit land may be near us *some* times, if not at *all* times."

"Where is the spirit land?" asked my interested questioner.

I repeated softly the first verse of Mrs. Stowe's poem:

> "It lies around us like a cloud,
> A world we do not see;
> Yet the sweet closing of an eye,
> May bring us there to be."

A voice from an adjoining room called "Edith." Rising to go, she pressed a fervent kiss upon my lips, and I knew that in that young mind thoughts were awakened that would not slumber until good had arisen from them. *H. H. D.*

For the Myrtle.

Some Fairy Stories.

FOR THE YOUNGEST READERS.

II.

I promised my little boy, and all the boys and girls, the other day, at the close of the story about Quarrel and Peace, to tell them one about two other fairies, Industry and Idleness. These are the names we give them. In fairy land they are called Diligentia and Ydel. They are twin brothers.

Industry is a plump, rosy-cheeked little fairy, full of life, and always busy as a bee doing something that will benefit himself, or somebody else. He especially delights in running around among little boys and girls who are studying their books, or working with their needles. He likes to help them, whispering pleasant words in their ears, and encouraging them over the difficult places. Then how their eyes brighten! They study all the harder, or sew the more diligently, and look

as if they were feeling that the world is a happy place to live in.

Idleness, though he is Industry's twin-brother, looks very differently. His body is lank, and his face thin. His arms hang listlessly at his sides, and when he walks at all, he moves lazily as if he had no strength in his limbs. His delight is to make everybody he can as lazy as himself. If he sees a boy studying his lesson, he shuts up the book, and tries to make him think that studying is the worst thing in the world. If he sees a little girl sewing, he throws her work on the floor, and tries to have her feel that her mamma is very cruel to compel her to do such things.

I saw a little boy, one day, sit down very happily when the hour came for him to study his lesson. He had his chubby fingers on the letters, spelling out the words so well that his mamma was greatly pleased to see him. But all at once he stopped. Idleness had come, and was softly whispering, "It is stupid work to learn to read; come and play in the sunshine with Robbie and the rest of your mates." Then the little boy threw down his book, and jumped from his chair, exclaiming, "What's the use of learning to read? I'd rather grow up a dunce!" How grieved his mamma was! Even his baby sister looked with wonder at the sudden change, while Idleness laughed his lazy laugh, saying, "Now I have him!"

But Industry was not far off; and seeing the mischief Idleness was trying to do, he flew to the little boy's side, and whispered in his ear. I can't tell you what he said. But what a change it made, and how glad mamma was to see it! The little fellow picked up his book, and went at his lesson again, reading it all through. Then he came to his mother for his kiss before he went out to play; and as she gave it, she said, "I guess the good fairies helped my little boy to do right this time."

Will you have Industry or Idleness as your fairy friend?

M. F. B.

Do it at once. Never wait to be told a second time. Do just what you are told to do. Do not try to have your own way. Do it cheerfully. Do not go about it in a surly, cross, peevish way. Don't fret, and grumble, and talk back. Only cheerful obedience can be pleasing to God and man. Let this be your rule in life.

For the Myrtle.

Birdie and Baby.

All the live-long day
Pass his hours away,
Singing, chirping, jumping;
Birdie's life is play.

Little tiny seeds,
That supply his needs,
Snapping, throwing, eating,
Trouble he ne'er heeds.

Keep his cage from sly
Pussy's artful eye,—
Lurking, watching, hoping
For his life to try.

Sleeping through the night,
With the morning bright,
Splashing, dashing, plunging,
Bathing's his delight.

Then his little throat
Swells with loftiest note,—
Brightened, freshened, strengthened,
Cleansed from every mote,—

But I'd rather see
What is more to me—
Laughing, crowing, splashing
Baby full of glee.

When from morning bath
Comes her merry laugh,
Ringing, singing, sounding,—
For a *soul* she hath.

She, with face so fair,
Has a mother's care,
Loving, watching, praying,
As has no birdie rare.

Then come kisses sweet,
All with love replete,
Tossing, fondling, pressing,
Baby's bath's complete.

Guard her, God, we pray,
Through her earthly way,—
Guiding, keeping, saving,
Each successive day,

From sin's baleful power,
Lurking near each hour,—
Shielding, helping, strengthening
This, our household flower.

M. F. B.

CHILDREN can do much toward making their parents happy, or they can send their gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. I trust all our children will be a blessing, and not a curse to their parents.

HE who but braces himself to the struggle when the wind blows, gives up when they have done, and falls asleep in the stillness that follows.

For the Myrtle.

The Good Physician.

Weary and faint upon her bed
Fading as fading moments sped,
The ruler's daughter lay,
Sinking into death's solemn sleep;—
The mother could but watch and weep,
The father could but pray.

One thought alone consoled their fear,—
The Good Physician journeyed near:
To him the ruler kneeled.
"My little daughter dying lies,
But thou canst bid her live and rise,
Touch her, that she be healed."

Then cometh one who sadly said
"Why trouble him? for she is dead;
And hope is all too late."
But the great Healer sought the room
And bade the stricken father come,
And all the doubters wait.

Serene and still the maiden slept.
Above, the mourning mother kept,
Her watch with hopeless eyes.

Wondering, she heard the strong command
Of one who took the slumberer's hand, —
"Damsel, I bid thee rise."

And while they gazed 'mid hope and doubt
The eyes through trembling lids shone out,
The pallid cheeks flushed red;
She moved, she rose, she sweetly spake
To Him whose power that spell could break, —
Their daughter was not dead!

Oh hearts who dare in fear to grope,
Who say "It is too late for hope,"
Ye know not Him ye call.
Trust Him beyond this life's short hour,
Nor think the dead beyond his power
Who came to save us all.

H. A. B.

For the Myrtle.

How Kindness Pays."

"WHY, there's a little girl sitting up on the shore watching us," said Alfred Ross to his sister Maggie as they were rowing along the pond. "Do you suppose it will pay to go up and take her aboard?"

Do you suppose it will pay? was a great question with Alfred. Maggie laughed.

"It would pay the girl, anyway," said she. "But we don't know her at all."

"Oh, no matter for that," said Alfred. "Nobody knows anybody here. I'm going to run alongside and hail her, anyway."

Alfred's manner was not quite so bluff and sailor-like as his words. He rowed quietly up to the shore, sent the boat with one sharp push up among the reeds, and then rose, and took off his hat very respectfully to the young Miss.

"Good morning," said he. "Wouldn't you like to come out rowing a little ways in our boat?"

The stranger's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Thank you," she said, "I should enjoy a ride very much. But — will it not be too heavy for your boat?"

"No indeed," said Alfred, "we often carry three in it. And I'm a pretty safe boatman, am I not, Maggie?" Then he bethought himself. "This is my sister, Maggie Ross."

"And this is my brother, Alfred Ross," said

Maggie. "And please do come with us, for I'm sure you'll enjoy it, and Alfred never *did* tip the boat over."

"And I am Lily Atherton," said the stranger, "and I *will* go, since you are so kind."

So Alfred helped her into the boat and she sat beside Maggie while he balanced the boat two thirds back, and rowed.

They soon found out that Lily had been there only a day or two and was going away the next day; for it was a country resort where they were staying. Alfred and Maggie had been there several weeks, and as Alfred had his own boat they had the pond all learned by heart. There was no end of the things they could show to Lily; the corner where the pond-lilies grew, among which they rowed and gathered a great bunch for Lily to carry home, the place over against the mountain where they had found the echo, and where they laughed and shouted and sung until they were hoarse, the cave, into which they could row the boat about out of sight, and most wonderful, the wild duck's nest with eggs in it, among the reeds on the bank, off which they scared the duck herself when they went to look.

Lily had a splendid time and went back to the hotel where they were staying, delighted with her ride and her new friends, and eager to tell her mother all about it.

Alfred and Maggie told their mother they hadn't had so good a ride all summer.

"Why, she hadn't seen a thing about the pond, and never would, if we hadn't shown it to her," said Alfred. "I tell you it paid, to see how she enjoyed it."

That afternoon a lady called to see Mrs. Ross. It proved to be Lily's mother, who as she would have no other way to acknowledge the favor, since they were going away in the morning, called to thank Mrs. Ross for the kindness of her son and daughter to Lily. She was saying this very civilly, and explaining how lonely Lily had been there without playmates, when something in Mrs. Ross's face caused her to look at her more attentively.

"Why, isn't this Emily Clark?" she stammered.

"Yes, I am Emily Clark," said Mrs. Ross, smiling, "and you are Lily Trumbull. I knew you the moment I saw you. But I wanted to see if you you would recognize me."

Mrs. Atherton and Mrs. Ross had been school friends together, and right glad they were to see each other again. The two families spent the evening together, and it ended in Mrs. Atherton's inviting Alfred and Maggie to spend a week with Lily when they all returned to the city.

The Athertons lived at a beautiful place in the suburbs, where there were grounds and flowers and fruit trees and all sorts of amusements. Maggie and Alfred spent a delightful week there and they all became the best of friends. Mrs. Atherton often said of the girls, "It is just Emily Clark and Lily Trumbull over again."

And Alfred was heard to remark, when the boat-ride was spoken of, "Ah, I think that boat-ride paid double." *H. A. B.*

Railroad Siguals.

"I'd just like to know," said a little man of seven years or so, who was nestling beside me in the seat of a railroad car, "what the fun is in that engine screeching as it does."

"It isn't for fun, my dear," we answered; "there's a reason for every sound it makes."

The great black eyes stared at us as if they weren't quite sure that we were in earnest; but we met the gaze calmly, and added, "we know the conductor on this train, and when he comes in again, we'll ask him to explain those railroad signals."

We did so, and as many of our young readers may not understand them, we state them here for their benefit.

One whistle of the locomotive means "down brakes"; two whistles, "off brakes"; three whistles, "back up"; continued whistles, "danger"; a continued succession of short whistles is the cattle alarm. The conductor's signal, given by a sweeping parting of the hands on a level with the eyes, means "go ahead"; a downward motion of the hand, "stop"; a beckoning motion, "to back." A lantern raised and lowered vertically signals starting; swung at right angles or across the track, to stop; swung in a circle, to back. A red flag waved on the track is a signal of danger; hoisted at a station is a signal for stopping; stuck up by the roadside is a signal of danger on the track ahead; carried unfurled on an engine is a signal that another engine is on its way.

GOVERN you thoughts when alone, and your tongue when in company.

Our Sunday Schools.

Accounts of picnics, and other vacation festivals of our Sunday Schools must wait another week for more brief notices of Children's Sunday. This time we begin the record with

CONNECTICUT.

—At Middletown the services were very impressive. At the close of the usual morning liturgical services, the children were brought forward for baptism, after which Dr. Hartzell preached a sermon on the mission of children, the best of his many good ones he has preached here. The audience were affected to tears. The floral decorations were beautiful.

—At West Meriden the church was very elaborately trimmed with flowers, the decorations about the pulpit and altar being wholly of white roses. Twelve little ones were brought to baptism, and the pastor, Rev. J. H. Chapin, preached a sermon to the children on "growing in grace and knowledge," which he paraphrased to mean growing in knowledge and goodness.

NEW YORK.

—The church in Albany was, on Sunday, June 14, decorated with flowers, the pulpit being almost hidden from view, while the exercises in the morning were for the especial benefit of the children of the Sunday School, who marched into church in body, did some fine singing, and listened to a sermon on "Little Things," written particularly for them. After the sermon five children and three adults received baptism.

—At Hudson the local papers pronounce the decorations the most beautiful ever seen in the city. The school occupied the seats in the body of the house, and conducted the singing. The pastor gave an address to the children upon the Importance of Trifles in the making and unmaking of character. Out of seventeen children whose baptism was intended, there were bnt five not prevented by illness or other unavoidable circumstances, so that another appointment is contemplated at an early day. Strangely enough, a similar necessity existed in this parish last year. In seven years the pastor of this church has baptized one hundred and thirty-one children.

—The 21st of June was observed by the parish at Auburn. A sermon suited to the occasion, was given by the pastor, Rev. J. W. Keyes, and several little ones were dedicated. In the evening the children held their concert. Of mournful significance to his many warm friends, was an arch, bearing, in letters composed of flowers, the dying words of Dr. Bartholomew, while, to add to the interest of the occasion, the beautiful poem, written by Rev. Phebe A. Hanaford, embodying those words, was finely recited by a class of the larger girls of the school. Memorial wreaths were placed for the beloved pastors Revs. D. K. Lee and J. G. Bartholomew, whose ministrations. ended on earth, leave a lasting impression.

—At Branchport, five children were dedicated to God by baptism. In the morning a sermon was preached to the children. The baptismal service took place in the afternoon in connection with a concert, making use of the *Helper* service, entitled "Coming to Jesus." After the exercises, some of the teachers and scholars adjourned to the cemetery and decorated the graves of those who had been connected with the Sunday School. There was a goodly display of flowers, and the occasion gave great satisfaction to all.

—Eleven members were taken into the church and twenty-five children consecrated by Bro Chamberlain in Clinton.

NEW JERSEY.

—At Newark the exercises were of great interest, on the 21st. Twenty children were dedicated. Concert by the children in the evening, at which the "Children's Mission," from the *Helper* was produced.

PENNSYLVANIA.

—The 21st was celebrated at both the Philadelphia churches. Rev. Mr. Bowles's church was very elaborately decorated with pots of rare and very beautiful plants, secured from one of the largest conservatories of the city, supplanted with liberal contributions of flowers from members and friends of the congregation and Sunday School. The Sunday School did the singing and participated in the opening services. Twenty-one children were dedicated to the service of God, and one young lady was baptized. After which the pastor preached an appropriate sermon on "Children and Flowers." At the Church of the Messiah, similar services were held, the church being most exquisitely decorated, chiefly with roses, and fifteen children being baptized by the pastor, Dr. Brooks, who, professing not to preach a sermon, delivered a very appropriate, able and eloquent address.

—At Reading, the 21st was observed. The Sunday School was in full attendance at the morning service and joined in responses. The pulpit and altar were finely decorated. Five children were dedicated. Floral concert in the evening. The singing on both occasions was especially fine.

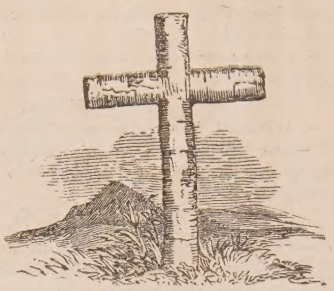
—The pastor, Rev. S. P. Carlton, writes from Pittsburgh: "Children's Sunday was observed by us with appropriate services; the attendance was unusually large. The pulpit was beautifully decorated with flowers. The pastor delivered a discourse on the consecration of our youth to God. The choir and the children of our Sunday School together cheered and gladdened all hearts with their happy song. The children behaved so prettily and seemed so happy, and all present entered with so much zest into the spirit of the occasion that we felt that it was good for us to be there. Four children were given to God in the solemn rite of dedication."

OHIO.

—We have already noticed the day at Columbus. On the same day, June 14, similar services were held at Cincinnati. Immediately in front of the altar was a beautiful rustic stand, covered with flowers of every description, roses, syringas, pansies, geraniums, etc., and surmounted by a floral cross, the centre of which was composed of lilies. Baskets of flowers were on each side of the desk, with trailing vines appended. The gas fixtures were also beautifully trimmed. The pastor, Rev. J. G Adams, preached to the children from the text, "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Some eighteen children were dedicated, and six members were added to the church, all young people, with one exception.

—At Springboro, Warren Co., where the editor of the *Star* officiates, the people were delighted with a visit from Mrs. C. A. Soule, in company with the pastor. The church was beautifully trimmed with evergreen wreaths, and the altar was covered with sweet flowers. Large congregations were present at both services. Mrs. Soule preached an appropriate sermon in the morning on "Christian Childhood," from the words, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Eight children were dedicated by the pastor, and one member added to the church.

—At Montgomery the day was observed on May 31. In the morning, the pastor, Rev. J. W. Henley, preached to the children, and baptized three little girls. In the evening a concert was given with great satisfaction to all present. The floral decorations were very appropriate.



The Saviour of Sinners.

The fifth disciple whom Jesus called, was not a fisherman. He "sat at the receipt of custom," when Jesus, passing by, said unto him "Follow me." This was Levi, the son of Alpheus, whose name was also Matthew, and who was so called among the disciples. Like several of the disciples he was probably a man of learning, and he wrote our first gospel history or life of Jesus. His business was that of a publican.

A publican was a collector of taxes. This country of Palestine (formerly Canaan) was not now independent. It had been conquered by the Romans, but the people had not been carried away captive as in former conquests; they were only obliged to pay taxes to the Roman Empire. For this was in the time of the Cæsars, when all the known world was obliged to "pay tribute" to the great Roman Emperors. The Emperor appointed Governors over the provinces of Palestine, and the Governors appointed men under them, Jews or Romans, to collect the taxes from the people. So Mathew, though a Jew, was one of these tax-gatherers or publicans.

He was undoubtedly a very good man, or Jesus, who "knew what was in men," would not so readily have called him to be his apostle. He was also a man of influence among the people. And he made a feast in honor of his new Master, to which many other publicans, and a great multitude of the followers of Jesus were invited. Scribes and Pharisees were also there, or they would not have had the opportunity to complain of him as they did.

Who were the Pharisees? They were a very strict religious sect among the Jews. The word means "separatists"; they separated themselves from the rest of the nation because they thought themselves holier and better. They professed to keep with great exactness the laws of Moses, and to follow all the traditions of the priests. Indeed Jesus accused them of thinking a great deal more about their sacrifices and burnt-offerings and washings, than about justice and mercy and love. They were from the first jealous of the Master because he followed not their traditions; and they seized every chance to influence others against him.

The scribes were generally Pharisees, and as their name indicates, were writers of the law. They were also teachers of it. "The law" meant to the Jews the laws of Moses, to which had been added the writings of the prophets, and to some extent the ceremonial laws of the priests. The people held these in great reverence, and a scribe whose duty it was to copy and teach these holy words did nothing else. So they formed a class by themselves. They were sometimes called lawyers.

It was these Scribes and Pharisees, or rather, Scribes and *other* Pharisees who took the occasion of this feast to begin their work of persecuting Jesus. They said to the disciples — not Matthew, of course, but the other disciples, James and John, Peter and Andrew — "How is it that your master eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"

This was rude language in the house of their host who was himself a publican as were many of his guests. And it shows the vain self-righteousness of these very religious people that they called all the rest of the company "sinners."

This joining of "publicans and sinners" shows how the Jews hated the tax-gatherers. It was like the feeling our forefathers had for the British, only much more bitter. They were a conquered people and they hated the foreign yoke. They hated everything that reminded them of the Roman power and especially those who enforced it. Very naturally then they hated the publicans, and despised a Jew who would become such. They were sinners against the nation. Jesus heard their words of scorn, or they were told him by his disciples. And what answer did he make to these righteous people who did not think they were sinners? We know the words well, or we ought to know them, and treasure them all our lives.

"They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

We need not infer that any of the company were so good that they did not need a Saviour; the fact that the Pharisees *thought* they were so good, proves that they were not. St. Paul says that God hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all. No one is wholly saved in this world.

The reply of Jesus shows the only way to be saved — through repentance. The Pharisees could not obey his call because they felt no need of his salvation. In order to be healed one must first realize that he is sick and put himself into the hands of the great physician. This is the salvation we pray for every day when we ask our Heavenly Father to lead us not into temptation, but to deliver us from evil. And only our Heavenly Father through the example and inspiration of Jesus who taught us these words, can so save us. To heal all souls from this stckness and sorrow of sin is his mission in the world. St. Paul, greater and nobler than any Pharisee, shows this to be a very precious truth to him when he says, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Will he do it? We are sure that he will. No soul is so sick or dead with "trespasses and sins," but the Good Physician can make it whole. No soul can sin and suffer eternally; for Christ has undertaken to save sinners, and his work cannot fail.

Bible Questions.

To whom should the children of Israel open their hand wide, and lend unto him? How much? What thought should not be in their wicked hearts?

Who asked, "And now, Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee?" What had he been relating to them?

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